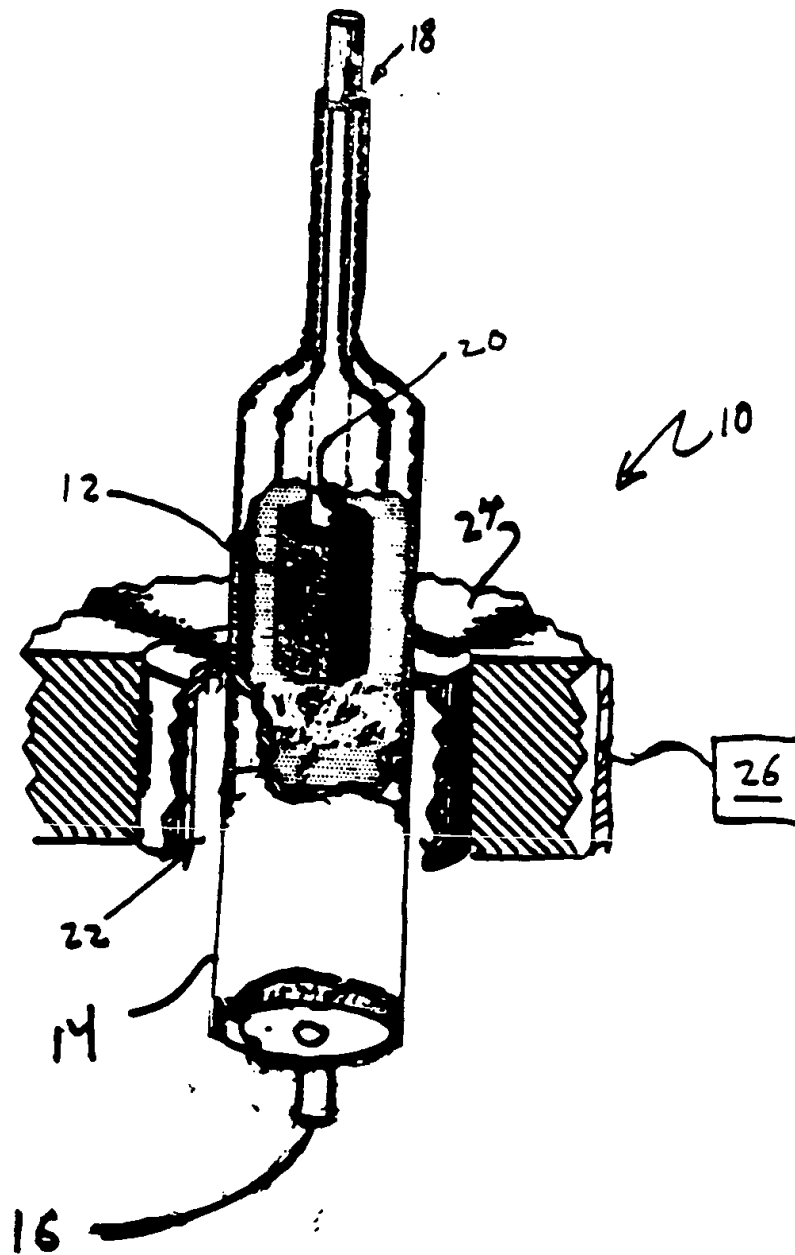


FIG. 1



Pass a gel body through a hot zone to partially sinter the gel body

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Repass the gel body through the hot zone to further sinter the gel body

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FIG. 2

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Subject an end portion of a gel body to a hot zone to partially sinter the end portion

42

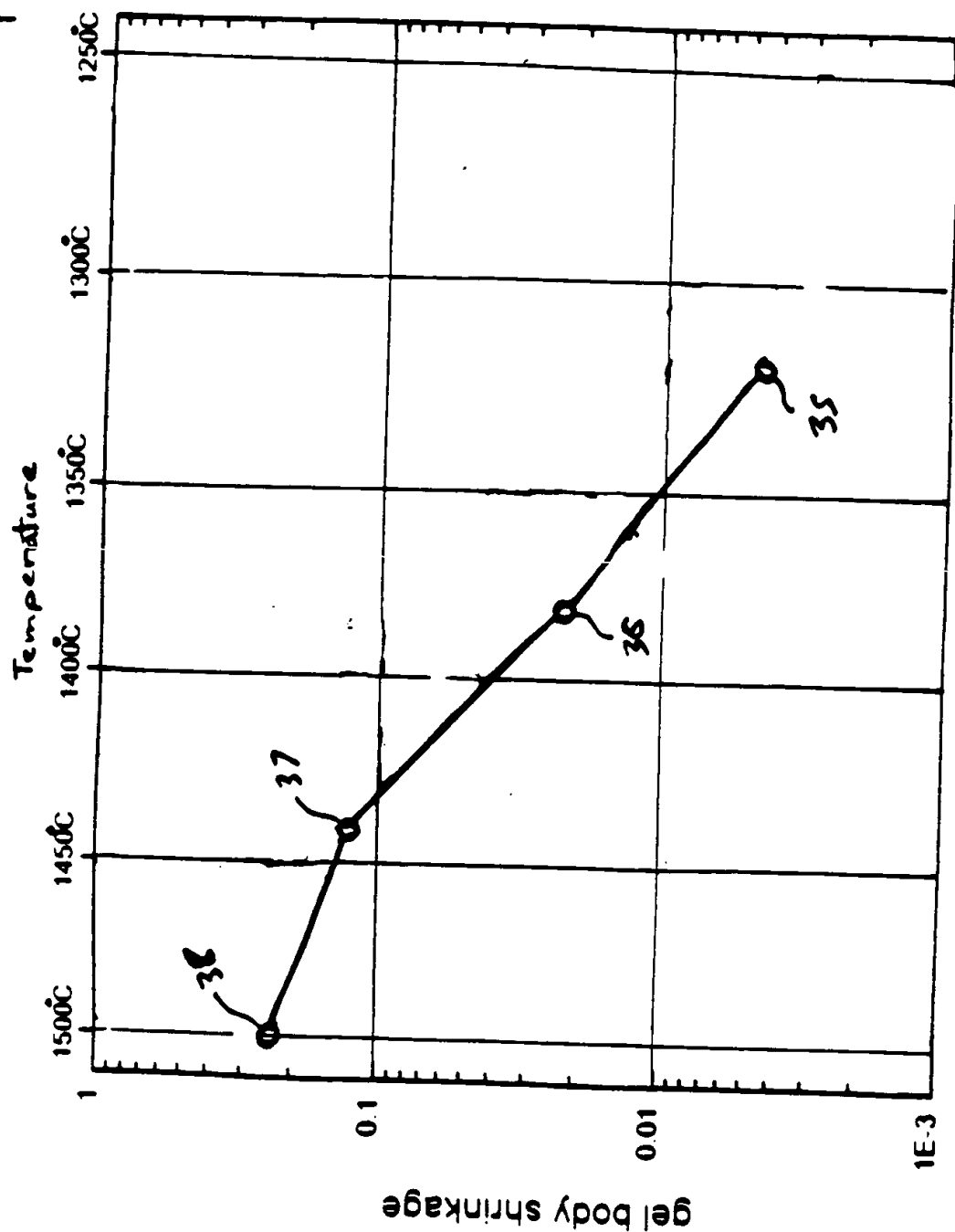
Pass the gel body through the hot zone to fully sinter the gel body, the act of passing causes the previously sintered portion to traverse through the hot zone last

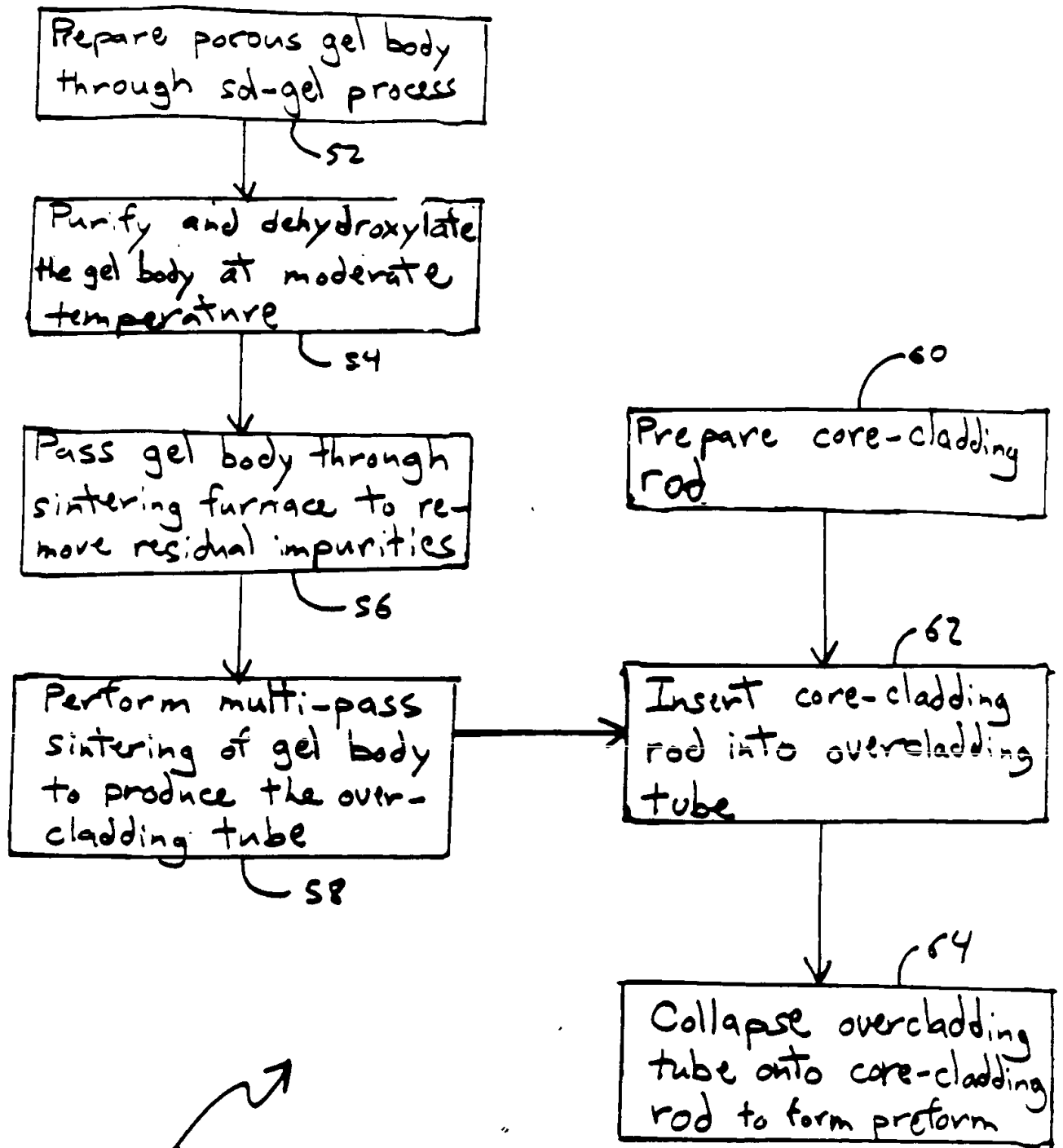
44

FIG. 4

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F16.3





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FIG. 5